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Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action

by Hassan El-Amin

The Office of Personnel Management recently published proposed regulations in the *Federal Register* establishing a Government-wide affirmative action program for disabled veterans. The proposed regulations require all executive agencies to develop and implement action plans for the recruitment, hiring, placement and advancement of disabled veterans.

Currently, affirmative action plans (AAPs) for disabled veterans are incorporated into the AAPs for handicapped individuals required by section 501(b) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These plans are under the jurisdiction of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Beginning October 1, 1982, however, the AAPs for disabled veterans will be governed by an independent set of specifications entirely under the jurisdiction of OPM.

The proposed regulations are designed to give agencies maximum flexibility in designing and implementing their AAPs. They feature a problem analysis approach which emphasizes specific remedial and affirmative actions. Under the new procedures, statistical data on disabled veteran employment will be provided annually by OPM to agencies participating in the Central Personnel Data File (CPDF). (Non-CPDF agencies, however, will be required to produce the data in a format agreed upon by the agency and OPM.) Agencies will then develop their annual plans based on their analysis of these data. Agencies are expected to use the data to determine problem areas and deficiencies in their employment of disabled veterans. The AAP itself will concentrate on specific methods to improve on previous accomplishments and eliminate deficiencies in the hiring, placement, and advancement of disabled veterans.

An important aspect of the program is that there are no requirements under the proposed regulations for statistical or percentage comparisons with the civilian labor force or Federal work force, or for the setting of numerical goals and/or timetables. Each agency will be permitted to set its own objectives.

Although all agencies must prepare new plans or review and revise existing plans by October 1 of each year, the plans must be submitted to OPM only when specifically requested. According to Marvin Kossmann, Chief of OPM's

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SPOTLIGHT on Affirmative Employment Programs

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FEORP: Maturity in its Third Year

by Rose Lee

"Despite impediments, Federal agencies continued to make progress in implementing FEORP during fiscal year 1981." So reads the third Annual Report to the Congress on the implementation of the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP), submitted in January 1982. The report shows that resources were allocated to FEORP efforts even in the face of general retrenchment in hiring and spending, and that agencies responded to the tight employment situation by diverting a portion of these resources from external recruitment to Upward Mobility and other internal recruitment programs.

P.L. 95–454, commonly known as the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, requires OPM to report to the Congress annually on the progress agencies have made in achieving the objectives of FEORP. Under FEORP, agencies develop plans to increase their minority and female recruitment efforts, both within and outside the

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Disabled Vets AAPs
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Veterans Employment Division, the regulations should help to improve employment opportunities for disabled veterans significantly, without creating a heavy paperwork burden for agencies. Persons having questions or wishing a copy of the proposed rules may contact Marvin Kossmann or Hassan El-Amin on (202 or FTS) 254-3058, or write to 1900 E Street, N.W., Room 6H35, Washington, D.C. 20415.

RIFed Hispanics Aided at OPM

by Rocelia Velez

This past March it was reduction-in-force (RIF) time at OPM headquarters, and among the 178 employees who received notices of separation were 12 new Hispanic employees. It was time to be inventive again, the staff of the national Hispanic Employment Program (HEP) office realized.

All but one of the 12 Hispanics had come to OPM from different parts of the country, including Puerto Rico, under the Interagency Placement Program, sponsored a year earlier by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and coordinated in the national HEP office. As a result of that program, 253 Hispanic men and women were placed in clerical jobs at the GS-2 to GS-4 levels in 16 Federal agencies in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The program, a very successful effort to fill clerical positions, which are a shortage category in the D.C. area, proved that a little bit of inventiveness and a little bit of coordination can go a long way. That was exactly what was needed again to retain the 12 RIFed Hispanics in the Federal Government.

The national HEP staff identified and called all 12 separated Hispanics to a brown-bag lunch meeting the same day they received the separation notices. Several other brown-bag meetings followed to provide more specific information on the RIF and OPM's Employee Assistance Program, to answer questions, review SF–171's and coordinate duplication, and to provide much-needed reassurance and support. In collaboration with some local HEP Managers, the HEP office organized a mini-job fair. Several agencies participated. Representatives from the Department of the Air Force, DARCOM (Army Research), the Department of Agriculture, NASA headquarters, Walter Reed Army Hospital, Veterans Administration Hospital, and the International Communication Agency came to provide job information and placement assistance.

Two weeks later all RIFed Hispanic employees had received job offers from other agencies, some had already moved to their new jobs, and others were on the way.

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From the Desk of...

This marks the first issue of the new consolidated version of the newsletter, ***Spotlight On Affirmative Employment Programs.*** The consolidation of three publications, *Women In Action, Spotlight,* and *La Mesa Redonda,* which was officially approved by OMB on March 31, 1982, does not mean that readers will be given less in the quality of the coverage on affirmative employment issues; on the contrary, the newsletter will be full of facts, current news, and information.

The new consolidated version will continue to provide news and information on Federal Government affirmative employment efforts. It will provide both assistance to Federal agencies on program implementation, and public information to the many persons and groups who closely monitor Federal affirmative employment programs.

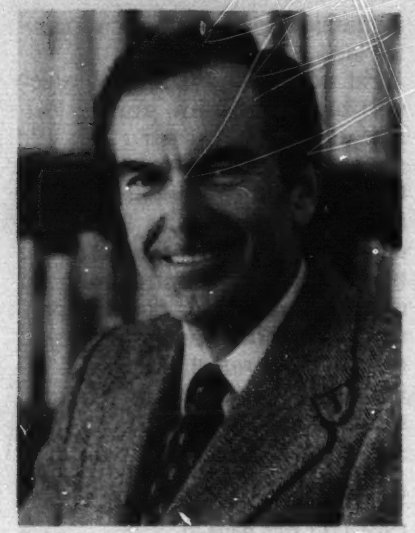
Useful information on the Federal Women's Program and the Hispanic Employment Program, employment and advancement programs for veterans and the handicapped, and updates on Upward Mobility and the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP), will be provided.

Articles will focus on specific examples of successful agency implementation of affirmative employment programs and related matters, including recruitment, training, effective employee utilization, staffing and the overall Federal EEO program.

While the three publications enjoyed an intense and loyal following by those of you deeply involved in affirmative action, the important pieces, including scholarly texts and academic papers, original articles, and reprints, will continue in ***Spotlight On Affirmative Employment Programs.***

A. Diane Graham
Assistant Director for
Affirmative
Employment Programs

Frost Heads WED



Frost

Michael R. Frost has been appointed OPM's Associate Director for Workforce Effectiveness and Development (WED). Under OPM's revamped organizational structure, the Office of Affirmative Employment Programs has become one of four divisions within WED.

Appointed on August 3, 1981, Frost was a state career civil servant who has spent the last eight years in the California civil service system. Before coming to Washington, Frost was Manager of the San Francisco branch of the California State Personnel Board. He served as Assistant Secretary of the Board from 1973 to 1977.

In announcing the appointment of Frost as head of WED, OPM Director Devine called him a "talented and experienced civil service professional who will be able to help move the Federal Government toward the Reagan Administration's goal of being more effective and efficient. Mike Frost's skills in the areas of management and research will enable him to give the Workforce Effectiveness and Development Group the kind of direction and leadership necessary to make real progress in improving Government performance and productivity."

VRA Program Extended to 1984

by William J. DeFusco

On November 3, 1981 President Reagan signed Public Law 97-72 which extended the Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA) Program through September 30, 1984. This statutory extension is contained in the "Veterans' Health Care, Training, and Small Business Loan Act of 1981." Details of the VRA extension are provided in FPM Bulletin 307-17, dated December 22, 1981.

The VRA Program is intended to provide eligible Vietnam era and disabled veterans with training and employment opportunities. This special program provides agencies with a useful employment option without increasing the cost of the employment process. In addition, the VRA authority does not create more Government jobs, because the positions count against an agency's regular personnel ceiling. Although there are limitations on hiring throughout the Government, the VRA program continues to provide a quick and easy method to employ disadvantaged veterans.

Since the program began in 1970, VRAs have provided employment for more than 170,000 Vietnam era veterans. The most recent hiring data show a total of 8,700 VRA appointments in the first half of fiscal year 1981. Of these, approximately 40 percent were minorities and 8 percent were women.

For more information contact the Veterans Employment Programs Division, OPM, Room 6H35, 1900 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20415, telephone (202 or FTS) 254-3058.

FEORP

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Federal Government, in those Federal occupations and grade levels where minorities and women show significantly less representation than they do in the general civilian labor force.

Although FEORP is a recruitment program and not a hiring program, the expectation is that FEORP actions will increase the number of minorities and women in applicant pools from which agency managers make selections.

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RIFed Hispanics Aided

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Some of them still call the HEP office often and say they are happy with their new jobs and do not anticipate going through another RIF. "You helped us not only to get another job, but to deal with the initial stress," said Sylvia Fasce, now employed at the National Institutes of Health. "SI SE PUEDE (Yes, it can be done)," says the national HEP office staff. That's the spirit!

Spotlight

on
Affirmative Employment Programs

Editor: Yolanda Gordon
Guest Editor: Nathaniel Deutsch (this issue)

Spotlight on Affirmative Employment Programs may be ordered in bulk by Federal agencies by riding OPM's requisition at the Government Printing Office (refer to OPM printing requisition 83-46). Agency requisitions [Standard Form 1] should be submitted through their Washington, D.C., area headquarters printing officer of that agency. Individuals and private groups may subscribe for $18.00 per year ($22.50 foreign) by writing the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

The Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of public business required by law of this agency. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director, Office of Management and Budget through March 30, 1983.

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Devine: Continue Affirmative Action Efforts

In this period of budgetary restrictions and personnel reductions, it is timely for agencies to reexamine the June 5, 1981 letter to agency heads from OPM's Director, Donald J. Devine, concerning Government-wide affirmative employment efforts.

In his letter, Devine gave clear directions as to what Government agencies are expected to do regarding affirmative employment under budget restrictions and reduced personnel ceiling levels. He stressed that "the administration expects agencies to pursue all appropriate efforts regarding employment opportunities for the handicapped, veterans, minorities, and women, as required by various laws and regulations."

Devine reminded agencies that "the Federal affirmative action program administered by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) administered by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) include coverage of personnel practices directed at internal as well as external sources of job applicants. . . . In limited hiring situations," he said, "agency programs should focus on identifying capable veterans, women, minorities, and handicapped persons already on the rolls and on developing them for movement into more responsible jobs and a wider range of occupations, consistent, of course, with workload demands and applicable civil service laws."

He added that "agencies which will be hiring new personnel, should consider using reemployment priority lists established by other agencies which have been subject to RIFs. Because of a tendency toward a 'last hired, first fired' effect of RIF procedures, veterans, handicapped, minorities, and women employed recently as a result of previous affirmative action efforts may be well represented on such lists."

Oswald Retires; Chen Named

Ms. Hedwig Oswald retired as Chief of OPM's Selective Placement Programs Division on April 29, 1982. In that position, she served as OPM's principal advisor on personnel policies, procedures, regulations, and legislation pertaining to the selection, placement, advancement, and retention of disabled persons within the executive branch of the Federal Government.

During her employment with OPM, Oswald earned a nationwide reputation as an expert in the art of initiating and implementing policies and procedures used in the placement of disabled persons into Federal positions. She began her employment with the U.S. Civil Service Commission (now known as the Office of Personnel Management) in its Office of Public Policy Programs in 1969. When this office was reorganized and titled the Office of Selective Placement Programs, she was named its Chief.

As program responsibilities increased, as the result of the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Oswald initiated numerous procedures, drafted legislation and formulated overall policy on employment of the disabled. She was also instrumental in developing and conducting the Outstanding Handicapped Federal Employees of the Year awards program, held each year in October.

Peter H. Chen has been named the new Chief of the Selective Placement Programs Division. Prior to this appointment, Chen was OPM's Deputy Assistant Director for Affirmative Employment Programs.

Chen comes to his new position with a wealth of experience in personnel management, position classification and equal employment opportunity. In a career spanning over 25 years, he has worked for a broad cross-section of Federal agencies, including NASA, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Department of the Interior, Department of the Air Force, and the Panama Canal Company (where he was named U.S. Citizen of the Year in 1961).

FEORP

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Agency reports for FY 81 indicated broad participation in two interagency programs: the FEORP Clearinghouse, a Washington, D.C.-based interagency forum in which agencies share detailed information on recruitment methods and sources; and the Interagency Placement Assistance Program (IPAP), an OPM-sponsored effort to help RIFed employees find new jobs.

During fiscal year 1981, the number of Federal employees in agencies covered by the FEORP program actually declined. Despite the decline, however, the percentages of minorities and women in the Federal work force continued to increase. This indicates a continued trend of increased attention to minority and female recruitment in the Federal service.

Administrative and budgetary restraints do not exempt agencies from the requirement to implement FEORP. Therefore, OPM expects covered agencies to plan and implement FEORP targeted recruitment activities in accord with their current and short-term projected hiring levels. It is anticipated that efforts will continue to focus on internal sources. OPM will provide continuing, focused technical assistance to agencies actively recruiting.